Calcutta Metro

2568. SHRI TAPIT BARAN TOPDAR : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Union Government propose to provide extra budgetary support for expansion of Calcutta Metro;

(b) if so, whether the Ministry of Railways have approached the Planning Commission in this regard; and

(c) the decision taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN) (a) to (c) : It has been decided to approach the Cabinet to provide dividend-free funds under Plan Head 'MTP' in the Railway Plan for Metro's extension, as also for making good the looses on the operation and maintenance of the existing Metro.

New TV Centres

2569. SHRI P.R. DASMUNSI : Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) the number of new Doordarshan Kendras, Relay Transmission Centres and new channels to be completed during the Ninth Five Year Plan period;

(b) whether there is any venue in favour of Darjeeling Hill, Baueghat, Purulia and Birbhum district of West Bengal, so far relay centres concerned;

(c) If so, the details thereof;

(d) whether any sports channel will be introduced during the Ninth Plan; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY) : (a) While 9th Plan proposals of Doordarshan are yet to be approved, 25 Programme Production Centres (PPCs), 16 HIgh Power TV transmitters (HPTs), 121 Low Power TV transmitters (LPTs), 106 Very Low Power TV transmitters (VLPTs) and 4 transposers, which are presently under implementation, are expected to be completed during the 9th Plan as continuing schemes, in phases, subject to availability of resources, infrastructural facilities and *inter-se* priorities. At present, no new channel is proposed to be started.

(b) and (c) While an LPT at Balrampur in Purulia district and TV Studio project (permanent) at Shantiniketan in Birbhum district are presently under implementation, HPT each at Balurghat and Shantiniketan and a VLPT at Baghmandi are envisaged to be set up in these districts subject to availability of resources and other infrastructural facilities.

(d) There is no such proposal at present.

(e) Does not arise.

SAIL Profits

2570. SHRI B.L. SHANKAR : Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state :

(a) whether attention of the Government has been drawn to the news-item captioned "SAIL profits hit by free pricing regime" appearing in the *Times of India*, June 29, 1997;

(b) if so, the details and the reasons therefor;

(c) the steps/measures adopted and proposed to be adopted to increase the profits of SAIL during 1997-98;

(d) the total production of SAIL during 1996-97 and likely to be produced in 1997-98; and

(e) the total export of the above steel production by SAIL and consumed indigenously during 1996-97 and to be exported and consumed during 1997-98?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINISTER OF MINES (SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA): (a) and (b) The profit (before tax) in SAIL in 1996-97 was Rs. 602 crores as compared to Rs. 1318.61 crores in 1995-96. During the year 1996-97 SAIL had to face abnormal increase in input costs on account of cost escalation in coal price, petroleum price, railway freight, power tariff, special custom duties etc. The impact of these escalations is about Rs. 1000 crores while only a part of this impact could be neutralised through improvement in operational efficiencies. Other reasons, which have affected the profitability, include decline in the international prices of steel and freer imports bringing the margins under stress as also the sluggish market behaviour etc. due to which SAIL could not pass on the impact of input cost escalation to the customers.

(c) SAIL is taking steps on a continuous basis to improve its performance, which include modernisation and technological upgradation of its plants, improving techno-economic factors i.e. reduction in coke rate, energy consumption, metallic input, improvement in yield, extensive customer contact, market oriented product-mix, improvement in quality, long term relationship with customers, leadership in service and customer satisfaction, strict control and monitoring of operating costs, higher productivity and greater autonomy to field officers, etc.

(d) The total production of Saleable Steel in SAIL (excluding subsidiaries) during 1996-97 was 9.235 million tonnes and the MOU target for 1997-98 is 9.6 million tonnes.

(e) During 1996-97 total exports of Saleable Steel from SAIL accounted for 4.79 lakh tonnes and domestic

sales for 75.87 lakh tonnes. For the year 1997-98 the MOU target for exports is 5 lakh tonnes while the sale for indigenous consumption would depend upon overall availability/demand scenario in the country.

Cancellation of Trains

2571. SHRI RAMESHWAR PATIDAR: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) the details of the trains cancelled between Sarai Rohilla Delhi and Ajmer on metre gauge line and between Delhi Junction and Ajmer on Broad-gauge line from December, 1996 till date;

(b) whether any public notice has been issued through print media about the cancellation of the above trains;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the details of the new trains alongwith their arrival and departure timings introduced during the said period between Delhi Junction and Ajmer (BG) and between Sarai Rohilla, Delhi and Ajmer (MG)?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN) : (a) The following Metre Gauge trains were cancelled after Dec. '96 due to gauge conversion work :

(1) 9943/9944 Ahmedabad-Delhi Express on Ajmer-Delhi section.

(2) 9905/9906 Delhi-Ahmedabad Fast Passenger.

(b) and (c) Yes, Sir. Public notice has been issued through media like Newspapers.

(d) After Dec.'96 the following Broad Gauge trains have been introduced, serving the traffic between Delhi & Ajmer :

9105 Mail	2916 Exp.			9106 Mail	2916 Exp.
1925	0210 ↓	d. Ajmer	a. ↑	0715	2310
0425	1015	a. Delhi	d.	2210	1505

An exclusive service on Metre Gauge between Ajmer and Delhi Sarai Rohilla has been provided after cancellation of Jodhpur Mail on Jodhpur-Ajmer section. It has been decided to introduce a weekly Swarna Jayanti Rajdhani Express between New Delhi and Ahmedabad *via* Ajmer during Aug.'97 to the following timings :

2428 Rajdhani Exp.			2427 Rajdhani Exp.
2215	d.	Ajmer	a. 0255
0505 ↓	a.	New Delhi ↑	d. 1945

Indo-US Scientific Cooperation

2572. SHRI AJOY MUKHOPADHYAY : Will the Minister of SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government are aware of the press report capitioned "Scientists see a threat in Wisner remark" appearing in the *Indian Express* dated May 22, 1997;

(b) if so, whether cooperation between Indian and American scientists could be jeopardised unless India tightened its intellectual property rights (IPR) regime; and

(c) if so, the facts thereof and the reaction of the Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF POWER (SHRI YOGINDER K. ALAGH) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) There are some differences on the intellectual property rights which have had an impact on efforts to work out a new science and technology agreement between India and the USA. Cooperation in science and technology between the two countries has been an ongoing process through last four decades, primarily at the level of scientific agencies, and also under the Indo-US sub-Commission on Science & Technology. This cooperation continues. Indian position on intellectual property rights, based on the social and economic requirements of the country, is known to the US side.

Private Sector in Transmission and Distribution

2573. SHRI PRADIP BHATTACHARYA : Will the Minister of POWER be pleased to state :

(a) whether the private sector participation in power transmission and distribution have any impact to meet power shortages; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF POWER (SHRI YOGINDER K. ALAGH) : (a) and (b) The participation of private sector in transmission and distribution of power will help in improving the power supply position as additional investment in transmission and distribution will enable transfer of power over long distance from pithead power stations/mega projects to load centres in several States and also result in reduction in Transmission losses.